

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 22, 2026

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Settlement Reached in Williamsburg Recycling Case

ANDREWS, SC – The South Carolina Environmental Law Project (SCELP), on behalf of the Coastal Conservation League (CCL), has settled with Williamsburg Recycling, LLC, resolving CCL's challenge to a state composting permit issued to the facility in December 2024. A motion to dismiss the case was filed on May 20 in the South Carolina Administrative Law Court.

In December 2024, the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (DES) issued a Type Three Facility Composting Permit to Williamsburg Recycling, LLC, authorizing the facility to process sewage sludge and wastewater residuals at its Island Road site in Andrews. CCL challenged the permit, contending that DES approved it despite the facility's documented history of regulatory noncompliance, inadequate financial assurances and insufficient protections for water quality and nearby residents. The case proceeded to a hearing on February 3, 2026, before the parties reached this resolution in May.

Under the settlement agreement, Williamsburg Recycling must fund annual water quality monitoring of drinking water wells within one mile of the facility for at least three years, covering coliform bacteria, metals and minerals. Neighboring property owners identified in the agreement will be notified of their right to participate. The settlement also requires Williamsburg Recycling to increase its financial assurance to guarantee proper closure of the facility if needed, including an additional \$10,000 toward property restoration costs.

"This settlement delivers something the permit alone did not: real accountability to the people who live closest to this facility," said SCELP's attorney Monica Whalen. "Neighbors now have enforceable rights and a real seat at the table, not just the hope that a state agency will act on their behalf."

The facility must also monitor incoming sludge loads for hydrogen sulfide levels, treat those that exceed threshold concentrations and install property-line monitoring equipment to manage odor. Additionally, it must reduce noise upon notification, maintain stormwater infrastructure and post emergency contact information at facility entrances.

"No one should have to worry about the direction the wind is blowing when their grandkids come to visit and want to play outside," said North Coast Office Director for CCL Becky Ryon. "I'm pleased Williamsburg Recycling was willing to work with us to improve the quality of life for their neighbors."

For three years, Williamsburg Recycling must meet annually with CCL and neighboring property owners to discuss ongoing concerns and present their mitigation measures. Critically, the settlement grants neighbors direct enforcement rights – a meaningful expansion of accountability that ensures compliance is no longer solely at DES's discretion.

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The South Carolina Environmental Law Project is a nonprofit public interest law firm. We have used our legal expertise to protect land, water and communities across South Carolina since 1987. Learn more at scelp.org.

The Coastal Conservation League advocates to protect the natural environment of South Carolina's coast for the benefit of all. We envision a South Carolina coast where wildlife thrives, air and water are clean, and natural landscapes are protected for generations to come. Learn more at coastalconservationleague.org.